Parks Canada Parcs Canada

Canada

LET'S TALK PARKS, CANADA!

Minister's Round Table on Parks Canada

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Minister's Round Table on Parks Canada
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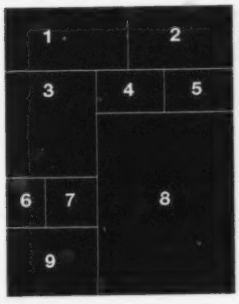

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Minister's Message

Catherine McKenna
Minister of Environment and Climate Change

I have the great honour of being Canada's minister responsible for Parks Canada. And every day, I get to work with amazing Parks staff and help inspire Canadians to connect with our country's natural and historical wonder.

Over the past two years, I've also had the privilege to visit many of these places myself—and I want all Canadians to have similar experiences. I've taken the Parks Bus from downtown Toronto to Canada's first national urban park, Rouge, which is only an hour's commute from 7 million Canadians, and is nestled among rivers, lakes and farmland. I've scuba dived at Fathom Five National Marine Park, in view of stunning stone pillars and windswept cedar trees; and I've boarded the HMCS Haida, a legendary Canadian naval ship now moored in Hamilton.

From the crashing waves of the Pacific to the icy shores of the Arctic to the craggy bluffs of the Atlantic—I've seen, again and again, how history and nature intertwine to form the rich tapestry that is Canada. And I've also seen how Canadians and people from around the world are yearning to connect with our land and culture.

Last year, to celebrate Canada's 150th anniversary of Confederation, a record breaking 27 million Canadians took advantage of our free national parks, historic sites and marine conservation areas, sharing experiences they will never forget with family and friends.

We want to improve and strengthen our parks places today, and for future generations. That's why in 2017 we held the largest Minister's Round Table ever conducted in our history. Thousands of Canadians voiced their opinions on the future of Parks Canada—through outreach events, online discussions, and workshops—and we heard them loud and clear: Canadians are proud of, and want to continue to protect, Parks Canada places.

From the feedback we heard during this historic engagement, I am putting forward three priorities for Parks Canada:

Sirmilik National Park

1. To **Protect and Restore** our national parks and historic sites through focussed investments, working with Indigenous peoples, working with provinces and territories, and ensuring ecological integrity is the first priority in decision making.

2. Enable people to further **Discover and Connect** with our parks and heritage through innovative ideas that help share these special places with Canadians.

3. **Sustain** for generations to come the incredible value—both ecological and economic—that our parks and historic sites provide for communities. The value they bring to fighting climate change, protecting species at risk, and shaping our Canadian identity and jobs and economic opportunity for local communities.

When we discover and connect with our natural and historic places, we better understand the value and importance of protecting them. Of course, it is our children and grandchildren who will take over the protection and maintenance of our lakes, rivers, and forests; and that's why we recently announced that, going forward, our parks will be free for kids 17 and under. As they are the stewards of the future, we want them to have a strong appreciation of our natural world.

Canada's 47 national parks and 171 national historic sites have enormous ecological value, but they are also critical to our tourism industry. They help generate billions of dollars for the economy annually and support roughly 40,000 full-time equivalent jobs across the country. They also contribute some $3.3 billion each year to Canada's gross domestic product (GDP). Parks tourism is important for many local communities, and illustrates how the economy and the environment go together.

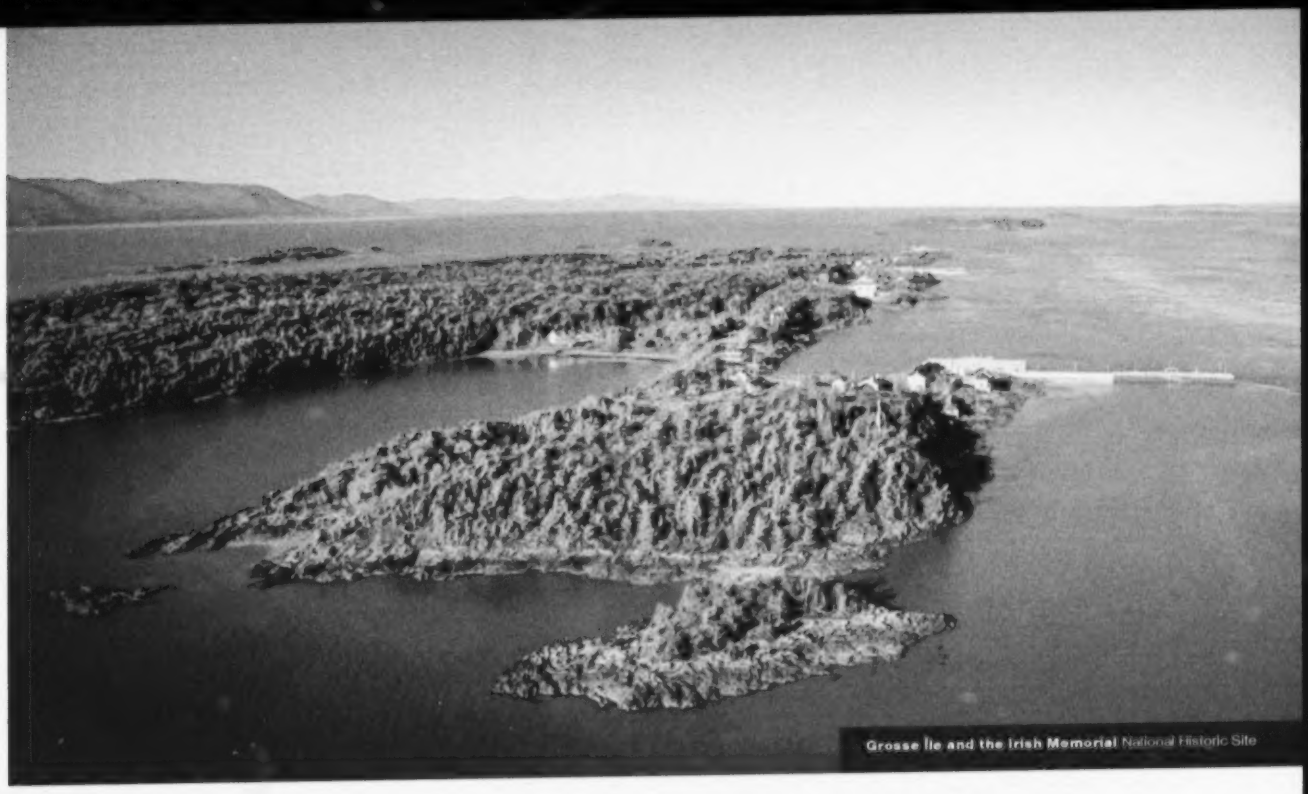
This is no more apparent than in Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve, which I visited with my children—and who, like me, were mesmerized. Nature is abundant there, and it provides for the local Haida people and those living on the islands. One of our guides told me: "When the tide is out, the table is set," meaning, the surrounding ocean helps to sustain the people—you can forage for crabs, dig for clams, and harvest all kinds of delicious food from the sea. Tourism also provides a major economic boost to the area, where jobs can be found as park guides, Indigenous Guardians, and further upisland, as sport fishing guides.

It's this type of engagement and inspiration that people travel from all around the world to experience. From our Arctic parks at Torngat Mountains and Sirmilik, to sites like Riel House and Green Gables Heritage Place, to the Rideau Canal in Ottawa—there is a rich legacy of history and nature for people to discover.

I am also very excited about the creative ideas Parks Canada is developing to bring our national parks and historic sites to Canadians. Through programs like Learn-to Camp, Citizenship Ceremonies in parks, our newly launched Parks Canada mobile app, and increased engagement through videos and social media, we are finding new ways to engage Canadians with the natural and historic wonders around them.

Our government has also made it a priority to forge new relationships with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis based on the recognition of rights, respect, cooperation and partnerships. Parks Canada has been at the forefront of putting this priority into action. We worked with Indigenous peoples to return bison to Banff National Park, to establish Guardians Programs, to expand Tallurutiup Imanga/ Lancaster Sound (Canada's largest marine conservation area), and to create Qausuittuq National Park—one of Canada's newest national parks. Further efforts have been made to include Indigenous traditional knowledge in research and Indigenous stories into Parks Canada literature and presentations. No relationship is as important as the relationship our government has with Indigenous peoples.

Budget 2018 reinforced our commitment to protect nature and work with Indigenous Peoples, with an historic investment of more



Grosse Île and the Irish Memorial National Historic Site

than **$1.3 billion over five years** to protect Canada's nature, parks, and wild spaces. That commitment included $23.9 million to integrate Indigenous views, history and heritage into natural and historic areas. This investment in nature will help protect species at risk, expand and manage protected areas, and facilitate partnerships with the provinces, territories, and Indigenous peoples to ensure a clean and thriving environment for future generations.

Our ability to experience world-class Parks places is due to the amazing Parks staff wearing khakis and green shirts. As well, scientists are doing excellent research on climate change and biodiversity, and staff work across the country to maintain and present our natural and historic places. I am particularly proud of the firefighters who played such a critical role in British Columbia and Alberta fighting the raging forest fires in 2017. I want to thank all employees for their remarkable work and for being great ambassadors.

Parks Canada places can be found in every corner of Canada. They form an important part of our communities, as well as our identity as a country. They reflect the very best that Canada has to offer the world, and in the following pages, you will see the strength of Canadians' connection to nature reflected in our plan to protect and manage Canada's Parks places.

It's an incredible honour to serve as the Minister responsible for Parks Canada, and I'm looking forward to working with Canadians to further protect and celebrate Canada's natural and historical legacy.

Chief Executive Officer's Message

Daniel Watson
Chief Executive Officer, Parks Canada Agency

Every two years, the legislation that led to the creation of the Parks Canada Agency provides an opportunity to talk with Canadians about Parks Canada's work in protecting and presenting our country's national heritage treasures. These Minister's Round Tables inform the work of the Agency and help guide strategy and decision-making.

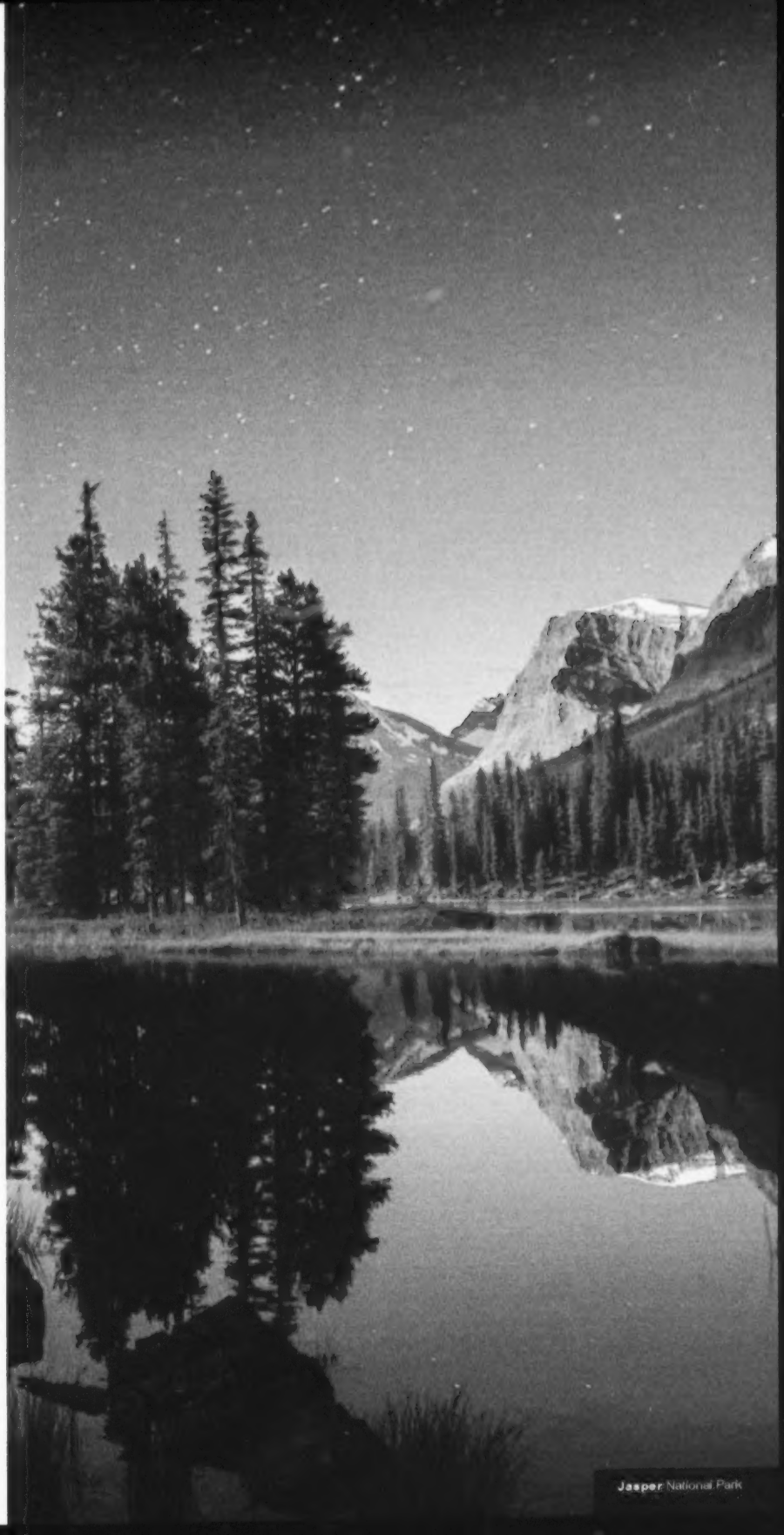
In 2017, Parks Canada undertook the largest ever Minister's Round Table, *Let's Talk Parks, Canada!* From January 9 to 27, more than 8,000 Canadians participated in online discussions, public outreach events, and face-to-face workshops. Some 5,000 more contributed their thoughts and ideas over social media.

The insights and perspectives shared by Canadians through *Let's Talk Parks, Canada!* are invaluable. They will help to shape the work of Parks Canada for many years to come as the Agency responds to challenges like climate change and declining biodiversity, and also to opportunities such as Canada's growing cities and increasingly diverse population.

There has never been a more exciting time to be involved in the work of Parks Canada. The Agency welcomed over 27 million visitors in 2017, delivering amazing experiences in national parks and national historic sites from coast to coast to coast. We are making significant gains in cultural conservation and in establishing new national parks and national marine conservation areas, and we are playing a key leadership role in advancing Canada's work to promote biodiversity and protect

17 percent of Canada's lands and 10 percent of Canada's oceans by 2020. We are working closely with Indigenous peoples and communities in the management of Parks Canada places, on visitor experiences, on commemoration, and on the important role of Indigenous traditional knowledge in conservation.

On behalf of Parks Canada, I would like to thank every Canadian who took the time to participate in the 2017 Minister's Round Table and share thoughts and perspectives on the future of our system of national protected places. Your contributions are helping to shape the future of natural and cultural conservation in Canada, as well as the presentation and enjoyment of national heritage places.



Jasper National Park

Parks Canada Achievements

Protect and restore

106 years

Age of Parks Canada, the world's first national parks service, established in 1911.

26 km²

protected by Canada's first national park, at Banff Hot Springs.

450,000 km²

area protected by Parks Canada.

222 places

Number of national parks, national historic sites, and national marine conservation areas protected and managed by Parks Canada.

109,000 km²

will be protected by the Tallurutiup Imanga national marine conservation area at Lancaster Sound in Nunavut.

200+ species at risk

known to be found in Parks Canada places.

10 bison calves

Ten bison calves were born in spring 2017 after the reintroduction of bison to Banff National Park, bringing the herd count to 26.

2,000+ Atlantic salmon

returned to their native habitat in Fundy National Park, thanks to 200+ volunteers, stakeholders and Indigenous partners.

75 m + 350 m²

75 m of clam garden wall and 350 m² of clam garden beach were restored in Gulf Islands National Park Reserve, thanks to 10 Coast Salish Nations and 250+ community members.

Sustain

2,500 students

employed by Parks Canada in 2017.

357,618 visitors

used alternative transportation (shuttles and transit) at Parks Canada places in 2017 to reduce emissions and traffic.

Discover and connect

27.2 million

visitors to Parks Canada places in 2017.

↑24%

increase in visitation to national historic sites in 2017.

↑10%

increase in visitation to national parks in 2017.

20%

of Canadian households ordered a free Parks Canada Discovery Pass in 2017.

95%

of Parks Canada visitors, surveyed nationally, were satisfied with their visit in 2017.

12,000

archeological sites found in Parks Canada places.

70,000

Canadians participated in Learn-to Camp in 2017.

↑636%

increase over number of Learn-to Camp participants in 2016.

18.9 million

visitors to Parks Canada's most popular destination, the Parks Canada website (www.pc.gc.ca) in 2017.

1.34 billion

views of Google Blog article about Street View visit to Quttinirpaaq National Park, in Nunavut.

170,000 downloads

of Parks Canada's mobile app.

180

infrastructure upgrades and projects at Parks Canada in 2017.

Top 3!

Parks Canada ranks in the top 3 of federal government employers on Forbes' list of Canada's Best Employers 2018.

1 About the Minister's Round Table

Minister Catherine McKenna at *Let's Talk Parks, Canada!* event

The *Parks Canada Agency Act (1998)* requires the Minister of Environment and Climate Change to hold a round table every two years to seek advice from Canadians on matters for which Parks Canada is responsible. *Let's Talk Parks, Canada!* was the eighth Minister's Round Table since 2001, and for the first time all Canadians were asked to participate.

This document provides a summary of what was heard and the actions the Minister will take to address the advice she received.

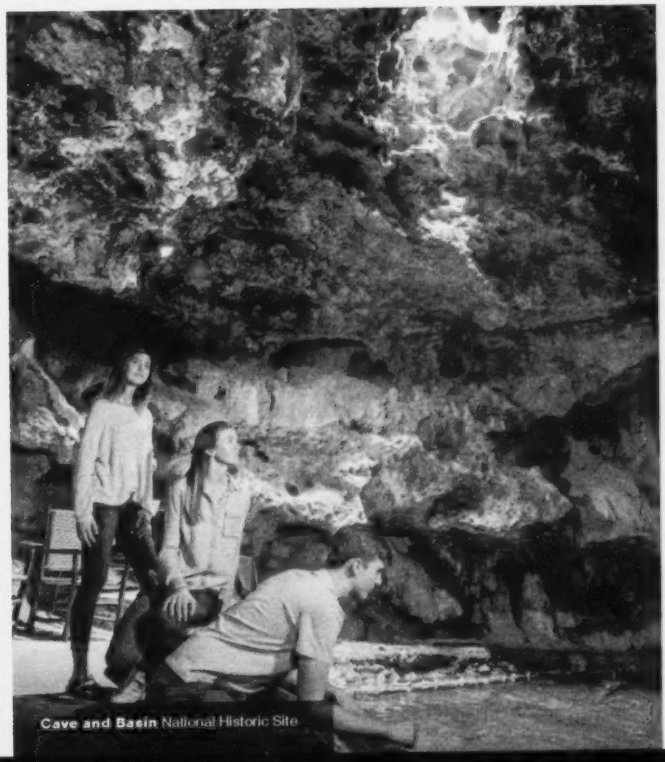
Minister's Round Table session

2 About Parks Canada

While the Parks Canada Agency was established in 1999, Canada's system of national parks, national marine conservation areas, and national historic sites, is over 100 years old.

Parks Canada's mandate has remained consistent since the Dominion Parks Service—the first national parks service in the world—was established. This mandate is to protect and present nationally significant examples of Canada's natural and cultural heritage while fostering public understanding, appreciation and enjoyment in ways that ensure their ecological and commemorative integrity are preserved for present and future generations.

Parks Canada is a Government of Canada organization that reports to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and is accountable to Canadians through Parliament. Parks Canada is responsible for the delivery of programs related to national parks, national historic sites, and national marine conservation areas across the country. To fulfill its mandate, Parks Canada staff work at sites in every corner of Canada and collaborate with Indigenous peoples, communities, businesses, academic institutions, and non-governmental organizations.



Cave and Basin National Historic Site

Kootenay National Park

3 The Engagement

The 2017 Minister's Round Table, *Let's Talk Parks, Canada!* provided an opportunity for all Canadians to offer advice about the future of Canada's system of protected places.

A national engagement was held from January 9 to 27, 2017. Five topics guided the discussions:

- Responding to environmental changes in Parks Canada places;
- Commemorating and sharing Canadian history;
- Establishing new national parks and national marine conservation areas;
- Helping Canadians connect with nature and history; and
- Promoting reconciliation between Indigenous peoples and all Canadians.

Participants were asked to consider the impact of environmental and social changes on the protection and enjoyment of Parks Canada places. The Minister also sought ideas for how government, Indigenous peoples, environmental groups, the private sector, and all Canadians can work together to respond to the challenges facing our national parks and national historic sites.

Minister's Round Table Session

Parks Canada reached participants over seven consultation channels:

- In-person meetings with groups and individuals;
- Public outreach events;
- An online do-it-yourself engagement kit used by others to host sessions and submit results;
- An engagement website incorporating an e-workbook where Canadians could share their perspectives online;
- An online discussion forum;
- A Facebook Live event focused on youth; and
- Written submissions received by mail and email.

In total, 13,479 Canadians interacted with the 2017 Minister's Round Table over the course of the engagement, making it the largest consultation ever undertaken on Canada's national system of protected heritage places.

Minister's Round Table Session

4 What We Heard

Canadians are clearly passionate about their national parks, national marine conservation areas, and national historic sites, and want to see them protected, stewarded, and enjoyed for generations to come.

Round Table participants were candid in their comments, and provided insights on protected places, on national programs and policies, on the important role of Indigenous peoples in conservation and commemoration, as well as on the environmental and social forces that will influence the future work of Parks Canada.

Prince Edward Island National Park

Participants recognized the need to protect and restore existing Parks Canada places, while at the same time growing the park system. Participants were aware of the environmental challenges facing our national parks and national historic sites, including climate change and development pressures, and want the government to be more proactive in addressing them.

Social forces include Canada's increasingly diverse and urban population, as illustrated by the 2016 Census of Population Program. New Canadians, youth, and urban Canadians may wish to experience national parks and national historic places in ways that are different from previous generations of Canadians. Other audiences, such as people with disabilities or people seeking

Kouchibouguac National Park

Commemorative Integrity

Parks Canada states that historic sites have commemorative integrity when:

- They are healthy and whole;
- The characteristics and features of the place that allow people to understand why it is important are intact; and
- the significance of the place is communicated to the public.

Ecological Integrity

Parks Canada states that ecosystems have integrity when their native components are intact. These include:

- Physical elements, such as water and rocks;
- The types and abundance of species, such as black bears and black spruce;
- The types and abundance of landscapes, such as tundra and rainforest; and
- The processes that make the ecosystems work, such as fire and predation.

the mental and physical health benefits that exposure to nature and culture can bring, also have different expectations of experiences at Parks Canada places. Indigenous peoples may wish to experience heritage places in ways that help to strengthen or restore valued connections to the land and traditions.

> *"Balance maintenance of ecological integrity and public access and appreciation."*
> ***(In-person session)***

Participants recognized Parks Canada's efforts and successes in working collaboratively with Indigenous peoples. They encouraged the Agency to continue its work to advance reconciliation by involving Indigenous peoples in the management of national parks, by working with Indigenous communities to deliver Indigenous cultural experiences to visitors, by strengthening the commemoration of Indigenous history, and by helping to facilitate reconnection with traditional lands in Parks Canada places.

After reviewing the thousands of contributions, the comments and advice can be grouped into three broad themes: *Protect and Restore, Discover and Connect,* and *Sustain.*

Torngat Mountains National Park

Protect and Restore

The theme of "protect and restore" was the most significant that emerged from the Round Table engagement. Canadians spoke about the unique place that national parks and national historic sites play in their lives, and the need to ensure they are managed, maintained, and restored so that future generations can enjoy the same experiences they did.

> ***"In creating national parks and national marine conservation areas, ensure boundaries encompass ecosystems, especially wildlife movement and habitat requirements, and be generous enough to accommodate future requirements due to climate change. Go beyond just representative features."***
>
> *(In-person session)*

Reaffirm ecological and commemorative integrity as the first priorities.

The most common concern raised was that the principles of ecological and commemorative integrity are at risk of being compromised. Participants called for the Minister to reaffirm that ecological integrity will be the first priority in decision-making in national parks and national marine conservation areas, and commemorative integrity will be the first priority in decision-making in national historic sites.

In the context of ecological integrity, many participants mentioned the need to strengthen the role of conservation science in the development of park management plans, and to restore funding to research, ecological monitoring, and public reporting that was cut in previous budgets.

National Marine Conservation Areas

Marine areas managed to protect and conserve representative marine ecosystems. They include the seabed, the water above it, and any species that occur there. They may also include wetlands, estuaries, islands, and other coastal lands. These areas are protected from such activities as ocean dumping, undersea mining, and oil and gas exploration. Traditional fishing activities are permitted, but managed with the conservation of the ecosystem as the primary goal.

The State of Canada's Natural and Cultural Heritage Places, 2016, noted that 10 percent of national park ecosystems were in poor condition, 36 percent in fair condition, and 54 percent in good condition. The report also noted that 38 percent of sites of national historic significance were in poor condition.

The Aichi Biodiversity Targets

The Aichi targets were adopted by the parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (of which Canada is a signatory) in 2010. Target 11, one of the 20 targets, states that by 2020 at least 17 percent of terrestrial and inland water, and 10 percent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, and integrated into the wider landscapes and seascapes.

Participants recognized the value of Indigenous traditional knowledge in conservation and restoration and encouraged Parks Canada to continue to work collaboratively with Indigenous peoples and communities to advance conservation and apply Indigenous traditional knowledge to conservation and restoration programs.

Some participants emphasized the need to strengthen the protection of national marine conservation areas, including through stronger legislation. Others observed that the sustainable use of marine resources could be achieved, but must be subordinate to the preservation of marine ecosystem health.

Concerns were raised that a focus on commemorative integrity, which should include an emphasis on learning and understanding, had been reduced in favour of a focus on repairing physical infrastructure. There were calls to reinforce commemorative integrity by adequately funding educational and interpretive programs.

Restore sites in decline and respond to the challenges of climate change.

Comments were received about ensuring national park and marine conservation area ecosystems can adapt to climate change. There was also a recognition that protected areas can help mitigate these changes through natural processes such as carbon sequestration, acting as refuges for impacted species, and working to ensure that the park visitor experience is based on a low carbon emission model (transportation systems, buildings, energy supply).

Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve, National Marine Conservation Area Reserve, and Haida Heritage Site

Many participants noted that sites that had seen decline – either from an ecological or a commemorative perspective – should be restored to a healthy condition. This includes sites that have deteriorated due to lack of funding, overuse, and new infrastructure development.

With respect to sites that are not in good condition, concerns were raised about ecosystem health, but also the state of built infrastructure in national parks and national historic sites. Several participants noted they had seen a deterioration of trails, bridges, and other facilities in recent years.

> *"Connecting hearts and minds, through engaging content and experiences, to our protected areas is critical for maintaining long-term political support."*
> *(e-workbook)*

Commercialization and development.

Closely linked to the need to reaffirm ecological integrity was a concern that continued commercialization and development have contributed to the degradation of some sites, particularly Banff and Jasper national parks, and that any new or redevelopment should be viewed through the lens of ecological integrity. Many participants called on the government to ensure that the highest standards of environmental assessment are followed for development proposals in national parks.

Several organizations that represent commercial activity in national parks talked about sustainable tourism, and the role they play in supporting outdoor recreation. In doing so, they were also cognizant of the need to conserve and protect ecosystem health, and the importance of interpretation in creating a positive visitor experience. Many organizations emphasized the importance of national parks and national historic sites to the economies of local communities.

There was frequent mention of the need to develop transportation alternatives to reduce vehicle traffic in high visitation parks. Not only would such plans reduce congestion and greenhouse gas

National Historic Sites System Plan (2000)

The planning document for commemorating the sites, persons, and events determined to be of national historic significance. Its objectives are to:

- Foster knowledge and appreciation of Canada's past;
- Ensure the commemorative integrity of national historic sites administered by Parks Canada; and
- Encourage and support the protection and presentation by others of places of national historic significance that are not administered by Parks Canada.

Traditional Knowledge

"Traditional knowledge refers to the knowledge, innovations and practices of Indigenous and local communities around the world. Developed from experience gained over the centuries and adapted to the local culture and environment, traditional knowledge is transmitted orally from generation to generation. It tends to be collectively owned and takes the form of stories, songs, folklore, proverbs, cultural values, beliefs, rituals, community laws, local language, and agricultural practices, including the development of plant species and animal breeds. Traditional knowledge is mainly of a practical nature, particularly in such fields as agriculture, fisheries, health, horticulture, and forestry."
(Convention on Biological Diversity, 2006)

Indigenous Protected Areas

Indigenous protected areas are conservation lands envisioned, declared and managed by Indigenous peoples. They are also a means for Indigenous communities to assert their responsibilities and rights to steward and manage their lands and resources.

emissions, but they would also help to mitigate the impact that traffic has on wildlife.

Establish new parks and marine conservation areas.

Many participants called for the system of national parks and protected areas to be expanded to include additional representative and important ecosystems, and to contribute to achieving the Aichi biodiversity targets of protecting at least 17 percent of terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems, and 10 percent of marine areas by 2020. In establishing new protected areas, there was a call for Parks Canada to work with other jurisdictions, Indigenous peoples, and partners to establish large connected networks of protected areas that support biodiversity. Doing so is necessary to maintain and restore habitat to support healthy wildlife populations, particularly in the face of climate change.

Some participants called for the establishment of new parks near cities, similar to the recently created Rouge National Urban Park, to create more gateway experiences for Canadians who live in urban areas.

Conserve our cultural heritage.

Participants shared a strong interest in Canada's cultural heritage, and mentioned the urgency of conserving and restoring sites and artifacts of historic significance. Some participants went further and called on the government to strengthen heritage protection through legislative measures.

It was observed that Parks Canada already plays a leadership role in the broader cultural heritage community. Some participants felt that Parks Canada should extend this competency to strengthen commemorative integrity at the hundreds of sites managed by other government agencies, by acting as an advisor to these departments.

There were comments that Parks Canada should renew its National Parks and National Historic Sites System Plans to reflect current heritage conservation practices, and the need to add sites that reflect the histories of Indigenous peoples and new Canadians. Participants noted that outreach, discourse on difficult historical topics, and Indigenous storytelling were important elements of our cultural heritage that should receive attention.

Build relationships with Indigenous peoples.

There was a recognition of Parks Canada's work to strengthen relationships with Indigenous peoples. Participants called on Parks Canada to do even more to advance reconciliation and involve Indigenous peoples in decision-making in the management of national parks. The Agency was encouraged to work with Indigenous peoples on stewardship of protected places, including expanding Indigenous Guardians initiatives, and on conservation, monitoring and restoration and to ensure that Indigenous traditional knowledge plays an important role in conservation and restoration programs and decisions.

There were also observations that Indigenous peoples can help Canada achieve its 2020 targets for the expansion of protected spaces through the establishment of Indigenous protected areas. It was also noted that working together can help advance reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.

Pukaskwa National Park

Discover and Connect

The theme of "discover and connect" addresses comments about encouraging Canadians to experience and enjoy Parks Canada places, with an emphasis on diversity (young people, urban dwellers, new Canadians, and Indigenous peoples). This would include being more accessible for families, people with varying abilities, the elderly, people with limited incomes, and people who for a variety of reasons have had little opportunity to enjoy the outdoors. Many participants emphasized that the experience should be centred on learning about the natural world, and encouraging more year-round recreational activities that do not harm local ecosystems.

Carleton Martello Tower National Historic Site

Focus the visitor experience on making a meaningful connection to nature and history.

Participants spoke about the transformative experiences they had gained by visiting and exploring Parks Canada places, and the lifelong connection to nature and history they had developed as a result. It was noted that outdoor recreation is an important way to connect people to the natural world.

There was a strong call to focus the Parks Canada visitor experience on connecting with nature and history, education, and stewardship. The goal should be to raise awareness of the value of historic places and wild spaces to ecological health and human wellbeing, while at the same time encouraging more people to be active in the outdoor environment. Some participants suggested that the experience should be year-round, with resources dedicated to opening more sites in the winter months.

Engage youth.

Closely associated with the call for helping visitors to connect with nature and history was the recommendation to focus on young people. It was noted that outdoor experiences gained when a person is young help to encourage a lifelong appreciation of the natural world, while also contributing to improved mental and physical health.

> *"We suggest that Parks Canada support development by First Nations of their stories as they relate to heritage places. First Nations youth should be hired to work at national historic sites to tell these stories. This could facilitate youth-to-youth connections and greater understanding and appreciation of the contribution Indigenous peoples have made to the development of Canada."*
>
> *(Written submission)*

Fortress of Louisbourg National Historic Site

Some participants called on Parks Canada to work with schools and the network of non-profit organizations engaged in youth outdoor programs, to facilitate more year-round visits to national parks and national historic sites in order to underscore the value of our natural and cultural heritage. There was also a call to support the development of provincially-specific education programs that would help youth discover and learn about natural and historic spaces.

Encourage diversity.

Many participants talked about the growing diversity of Canada's population, and recommended that Parks Canada ensure its programs address societal changes by becoming aware of how different populations connect to its places. There were also calls to make national parks and national historic sites more accessible to people with varying abilities.

Using new media technology, marketing, and communication techniques such as virtual reality to facilitate awareness of Parks Canada places, particularly in the North, were also mentioned. The suggestion was made on the understanding that such programming would support but not replace the goal of encouraging people to physically visit parks to experience the natural environment.

Discover our cultural heritage.

Participants called on Parks Canada to find new and innovative ways to present Canada's history, and to help connect a new generation of Canadians to stories about our culture and history, particularly with respect to Indigenous perspectives. Using technology to facilitate learning and discovery was mentioned as a way to achieve greater awareness.

Indigenous experiences.

Parks Canada was encouraged to do more to introduce Canadians to Indigenous cultures, knowledge, and history. Visitor experiences delivered by Indigenous peoples or communities at Parks Canada places would be valued and enjoyed by visitors. They would also help to foster greater understanding of Canada's rich Indigenous history and could offer an Indigenous point of view on the stories of Canada and Parks Canada places, which may differ from the more traditional narrative heard in the past.

Sustain

The theme of "sustain" covers comments related to the governance of Parks Canada, sustainable funding, and transparency in decision-making, information sharing, and public consultation.

Governance.

Some participants asked that the governance structure at Parks Canada be reviewed to ensure that the core principles of ecological and commemorative integrity are given priority, as required by law. There were calls to form independent committees to advise the Minister on specific matters – from ecological integrity, to development activity in parks. There were also comments about establishing a Board of Governors for the Parks Canada Agency, or an independent National Advisory Committee, reporting to the Minister and providing ongoing advice and guidance.

Funding.

There were frequent calls to restore science funding that had been cut in previous budgets, and to invest in new areas that are considered important to the future of national parks and national historic sites, for example climate change. There was also mention of one-time funding to undertake infrastructure maintenance and restoration that is needed to return sites to good condition.

Some participants noted that entry fees can be a barrier for some Canadians, including those on limited incomes, or schools that lack funding for entrance fees and transportation to parks and heritage sites.

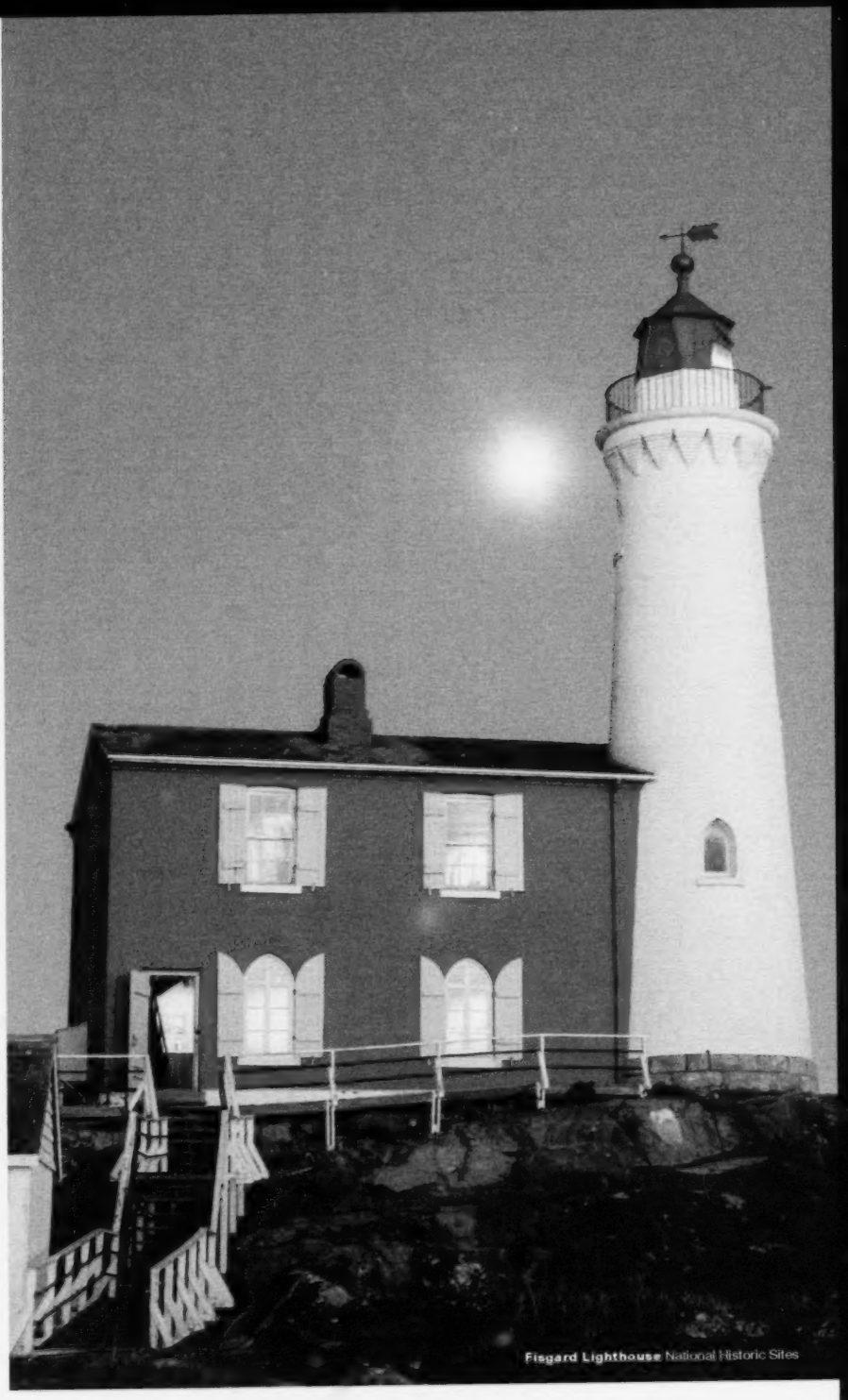
There was also recognition that entrance fees and leasehold revenues help pay for Parks Canada operations, but that they should not become a barrier for access to parks or prevent the participation of the private sector in helping to create a positive visitor experience.

Pacific Rim National Park Reserve

Transparency.

There were requests for scientific and social science data produced by Parks Canada to be made accessible to the public. In addition, participants highlighted the need to make environmental assessments more open and transparent, and requested that "state of park" reports be prepared every five years for individual national parks and national marine conservation areas, and made publicly available in a timely manner.

Some participants requested that monitoring programs, reports, and environmental assessments be peer reviewed by external experts prior to release in order to ensure their scientific rigour and transparency. There were also calls that all records of public accountability sessions (planning forums, Minister's round tables, and environmental assessments) be made publicly available.



Fisgard Lighthouse National Historic Sites

5 What We Will Do—The Minister's Response

Overview

The results of the 2017 Round Table engagement suggest a reimagining of the role that Parks Canada places can play in the future. This will require a focus on several priorities, including:

Fort Langley National Historic Site

- Budget 2018 made a historic investment of $1.3 billion in the protection of habitat and species. These resources, over the next five years, will enable Canada to make a determined effort to expand Canada's protected and conserved areas network to meet the Aichi biodiversity targets of at least 17 percent of land and freshwater and 10 percent of the ocean by 2020. Accomplishing these targets will require working in close partnership with provinces, territories, Indigenous peoples, non-profit organizations, and industry.
- A recommitment to ecological integrity as the first priority in decision-making and a commitment to advancing conservation science and Indigenous traditional knowledge to ensure Parks Canada can respond to the challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss, and development and commercial pressures.

Bruce Peninsula National Park

- Encouraging a broader diversity of Canadians to experience Parks Canada places and fostering greater awareness and connection to natural and historic spaces, and promoting ecological health and human wellbeing, including through personal experiences, virtual reality, social media, and school programs.
- A recognition of the importance of low-impact outdoor recreation to Canadians, and the need to reduce or eliminate barriers to participation and accessibility.
- An emphasis on commemorative integrity at national historic sites, together with the need to dedicate additional resources to education and interpretive programs.
- An acknowledgement that the environment and the economy complement each other in Parks Canada operations, contributing about $3.38 billion annually to Canada's GDP. In addition, local businesses, whether they operate inside parks or support experiences from communities outside of Parks Canada places, play an important role in job creation, economic activity, and innovation.
- Strengthening the role that Parks Canada plays in reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, and continuing to advance collaboration with Indigenous peoples on conservation, restoration, and enjoyment of national parks and national historic sites.

In the following pages, we outline the actions we will take to address what was heard through the engagement process.

Theme: Protect and Restore

Ecological integrity is the first priority for Parks Canada in the management of national parks and maintaining ecological and commemorative integrity is the prerequisite to the use of national parks and national historic sites.

Rouge National Urban Park

At the same time, encouraging Canadians to visit and experience Parks Canada places provides a deeper connection for Canadians to nature and history. A recent national conservation survey commissioned by the Schad Foundation and the Boreal Songbird Initiative corroborates these objectives, with a majority of Canadians supporting protected areas and the creation of new parks.

Several initiatives taken in 2016 and 2017 reflect what we heard during the Minister's Round Table engagement:

- In 2016, steps were taken towards the creation of Rouge National Urban Park, the first of its kind in Canada, to protect more of the Rouge's important ecosystems and heritage, as well as ensure ecological integrity is the first priority when managing the park.
- In 2017, the Government of Canada signed an agreement with the Government of Nunavut and the Qikiqtani Inuit Association to set the boundary for a national marine conservation area in Talluturiup Imanga / Lancaster Sound. At 109,000 km^2, it will be the single largest protected area in Canada. This partnership is an example of the importance and scale of opportunity in working together.
- After seven years of planning, community engagement, and collaboration with Indigenous groups, 16 healthy bison—mostly pregnant two-year-olds—were reintroduced to the subalpine ecoregion of Banff National Park on February 1, 2017. Ten healthy bison calves were born in June, bringing the herd to 26 animals. This initiative has been widely celebrated as it reversed more than a century of absence from the ecosystem and restored a key species to the national park.
- On October 27, 2017, three southern communities of the Syilx/Okanagan Nation, the Government of Canada, and the Province of British Columbia announced they will move forward to protect lands as a national park reserve in the South Okanagan.

Banff National Park

- Parks Canada fire staff are working to reduce wildfire risk across many national parks. In the winter and spring of 2017-2018, 17 wildfire risk reduction projects are underway in parks across the country, including the park communities of Banff, Jasper, Wasagaming, and Waskesiu. The value of proactive wildfire risk reduction work was demonstrated in dramatic fashion in September 2017 during the management of the Mount Kenow wildfire in Waterton Lakes National Park. Fuel reduction work completed prior to the arrival of the wildfire was key to protecting infrastructure in Waterton Lakes. During the fire, Parks Canada staff were instrumental in fighting the wildfire.
- Parks Canada and the Government of Alberta are jointly leading on the "Pathway to Canada Target 1". Working with all the provinces and territories, a transformative approach to conservation in Canada is being developed. The goal is to increase the amount of area protected or conserved in Canada by 650,000 km^2 (larger than the size of France) in a way that also contributes to Indigenous reconciliation.
- Parks Canada has publicly released all of the species-at-risk recovery strategies it was mandated to produce and has completed 21 multi-species action plans to coordinate actions for the recovery of species on the ground.

To build on these successes, and guided by input from the 2017 Minister's Round Table, the Minister commits to the following actions.

What We Heard	What We Will Do—The Minister's Response
Establish new parks and marine conservation areas. The National Parks System Plan was originally written in the early 1970s. Its goal was to establish a system of national parks that represents each of Canada's distinct natural regions. At present, the plan is just over 77 percent completed.	**Through Budget 2018, the Government of Canada is committed to a major increase in protected areas both on land and in marine areas. This demonstrates our commitment to putting Canada on a path to fulfilling our international protected area targets as agreed to under the International Convention on Biological Diversity (the Aichi Target 11/Canada Target 1). To do this, we will:** • Advance work with provincial and territorial governments, and Indigenous peoples, to finalize the creation of currently proposed national parks and national marine conservation areas. Continue to explore options for additional national parks. • Work with other levels of government and stakeholders to advance biodiversity through connectivity of protected places and alternative approaches to protected areas. • By the end of 2020, revise the National Parks System Plan. The update will be based on current conservation science, Indigenous traditional knowledge, and considerations related to climate change, biodiversity, and other environmental factors. The revised plan will ensure that important sites are identified and prioritized, that their role in a broader network of protected areas is clear, and that effective mechanisms to protect them are put in place. Barriers to the creation of protected areas will be identified, and actions to speed up the process will be undertaken. • In partnership with Indigenous peoples and others, work to achieve the Aichi targets for protecting lands and inland waters. This work, which is part of the "Pathway to Canada Target 1" process, will continue to be grounded in science and Indigenous traditional knowledge, and will contribute to the creation of a connected network of protected and conserved areas.

What We Heard	What We Will Do—The Minister's Response
Establish new parks and marine conservation areas. *(continued)*	• Advance the establishment of Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas in collaboration with Indigenous peoples across Canada. • Provide international leadership in the creation and operation of parks through commitments to work with other national park departments and agencies. An example of this leadership is the recent Statement of Cooperation with the People's Republic of China where we will share Parks Canada expertise to the establishment of a Chinese National Parks System. • Following from the Minister's mandate letter (2015), review what actions Parks Canada can take—in collaboration with Environment and Climate Change Canada and Fisheries and Oceans Canada—to help protect the Great Lakes, the St. Lawrence River Basin, and the Lake Winnipeg Basin.

What We Heard	What We Will Do—The Minister's Response
Reaffirm that ecological integrity will be the first priority in decision-making in national parks and marine conservation areas, and that commemorative integrity will the first priority in decision-making in national historic sites.	**I unequivocally reaffirm that the maintenance or restoration of ecological integrity, through the protection of natural resources and natural processes, will be the first priority when considering all aspects of the management of national parks. I reaffirm also that maintaining ecological and commemorative integrity will be prerequisites to the use of national parks and national historic sites. To do this we will:** • Create a short-term independent working group with expertise in governance, policy development, ecological science, and heritage conservation to review Parks Canada practices, policies, planning and monitoring programs, and approval processes, and make recommendations to ensure that maintaining ecological and commemorative integrity are priority considerations in decision-making. Recommendations from the working group will be presented to the Minister by August 31, 2018.

What We Heard	What We Will Do—The Minister's Response
Ensure science guides decision-making at Parks Canada and reinvest in science capacity.	**Being guided by science is key to ensuring that ecological integrity is given the first priority. To confirm the emphasis on science we will:** • Advance conservation science through close collaboration between Parks Canada and Environment and Climate Change Canada. • Consult with the Government of Canada's Chief Science Advisor to better integrate science in decision-making and facilitate greater public access to the conservation science conducted by Parks Canada. • Continue to strengthen Parks Canada conservation science capacity, and continue to foster ongoing collaboration between Parks Canada and Environment and Climate Change Canada on conservation science to better monitor ecological integrity and inform planning and decision-making activities. • Ensure that Parks Canada's decision-making in national parks and national marine conservation areas is guided by conservation science and respects the legislated requirement to maintain or restore ecological integrity in national parks and manage national marine conservation areas for ecological sustainability. • Develop a knowledge strategy to enhance knowledge development, sharing, and partnership in support of evidence-based decision-making. Restore the requirement to review national park management plans at least every five years and produce State of Park reports for each park every five years that are publicly available for review by scientists, the public, and other interested parties.

What We Heard	What We Will Do—The Minister's Response
Restore sites that have experienced ecological or commemorative decline, and respond to the challenges of climate change.	**To maintain or restore ecological integrity, including addressing the impacts of climate change, habitat loss and fragmentation, and to advance the rehabilitation of contaminated sites and efforts to preserve historical and archeological sites that are at risk, we will:** • Conduct research into how climate change impacts protected spaces. New investments in conservation science capacity will help Parks Canada conduct vulnerability assessments and identify actions required to help ecosystems adapt. • Ensure that conservation and restoration work address the need to enhance ecological connectivity within and around parks as part of climate adaptation efforts. • Recognize and report on the value of natural capital, and capturing and storing carbon that occurs in Canada's protected ecosystems. • Ensure that when parks and historic infrastructure are updated or renovated these improvements significantly reduce carbon emissions and improve efficiency in the use of energy and water in line with the government's green procurement commitments. • Protect existing habitat and renew ecosystem restoration efforts to ensure that species-at-risk can recover in national parks and protected areas, and work collaboratively with Environment and Climate Change Canada and other jurisdictions to protect endangered species adjacent to national parks and protected area boundaries. • Inventory archeological and historic sites at risk from climate change and development pressures, and work in partnership with Indigenous peoples and academic institutions to record and preserve these places.

What We Heard	What We Will Do—The Minister's Response
Restore sites that have experienced ecological or commemorative decline, and respond to the challenges of climate change. *(continued)*	**For infrastructure and assets that have seen a deterioration (i.e., as defined in the State of Canada's Natural and Cultural Heritage Places Report), plans to restore them will be developed, resources secured, and timelines established to undertake the work necessary to return them to a healthy state. To address this, we will:** • Complete an evaluation of strategic assets, and identify the resources needed to restore infrastructure, including national historic sites, to an acceptable state, or to decommission some infrastructure and rehabilitate the site. • Complete the repair and restoration work of high priority infrastructure utilizing the $370 million allocated from Budget 2017 for the next two years.

What We Heard	What We Will Do—The Minister's Response
Review the commercialization and development that occur in national parks, particularly in Banff and Jasper national parks.	**Maintaining and restoring ecological integrity requires limits on development in national parks, particularly those where development can impact ecosystem health. Protecting national parks by limiting development is also a direction in the Minister's 2015 Mandate Letter.** **At the same time national parks play an important role in our tourism sector. Commercial activity in our parks can positively facilitate the visitor and recreational experience, provide opportunities to attract a broader diversity of Canadians to our natural heritage, and help support local communities. In order to ensure that ecological integrity is not compromised, we will take the following actions:** • Ensure that management plan review and renewal in Banff and Jasper national parks incorporates focused engagement on processes and approaches for decision-making for large-scale commercial development that considers the priority of ecological integrity as well as the principles of openness and transparency. • Undertake a review of development and land use management decision-making tools to ensure a consistent and transparent process for development decisions at Parks Canada places. • Ensure that the highest standards of environmental assessment are applied to new development and redevelopment proposals in national parks, national marine conservation areas, and national historic sites. • Explore ongoing improvements to transportation plans for Parks Canada places that experience high vehicle traffic, including initiatives to limit traffic, add shuttle services, or provide alternate transit and travel options. Parks Canada undertook a number of successful transportation initiatives to respond to high visitation levels in the summer of 2017, which serve as positive examples.

What We Heard	What We Will Do—The Minister's Response
Conserve our cultural heritage.	**Parks Canada plays a key role in protecting and conserving the nation's cultural heritage. To strengthen this role, we will:** • Update the National Parks and National Historic Sites System Plans. • Review legislative measures, financial tools, and best practices to strengthen heritage conservation and protection. Advance Parks Canada's leadership role in the broader cultural heritage community, and provide standards and guidelines for the conservation of historic places outside of Parks Canada sites. This will involve liaising with other government departments and agencies to ensure a consistent standard of heritage conservation occurs across the Federal government. • In partnership with provinces and territories, provide leadership in the implementation of international commitments, including the United Nations World Heritage Convention. • Engage Indigenous organizations on amendments to the *Historic Sites and Monuments Act*, to provide for permanent Indigenous representation on the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada.

What We Heard	What We Will Do—The Minister's Response
Recognize and support the role that Indigenous peoples play in managing and conserving spaces, and engage First Nations, Métis, and Inuit in decision-making that affects their traditional territories or cultural heritage.	**Advancing Parks Canada's collaboration with Indigenous peoples to strengthen the Agency's most important relationship in the spirit of reconciliation by:** • Adopting the Principles respecting the Government of Canada's relationship with Indigenous peoples as the framework for a renewed partnership. • Collaborating with Indigenous groups and communities in the management of all Parks Canada places, including in management planning. • Facilitating opportunities to restore historic connection to traditionally used lands and waters. • Involving Indigenous peoples in conservation programs and ensuring that Indigenous traditional knowledge and Arctic marine science informs conservation and management decisions. • Acting on the work of the Indigenous Circle of Experts, who have submitted a report to the Minister on how Indigenous people can contribute to achieving Canada's conservation objectives. • Work with Inuit, Métis, and First Nations in the advancement of indigenous protected and conserved areas. • Where possible, expanding Indigenous stewardship and guardians programs and initiatives in Parks Canada places as a core element of a renewed partnership. • Work with Indigenous peoples and communities on opportunities for interpretive and storytelling programs rooted in traditional activities and traditional knowledge.

Theme: Discover and Connect

Encouraging Canadians to develop a deeper connection to Canada's natural and cultural heritage is a key aspect of Parks Canada's mandate to "foster public understanding, appreciation, and enjoyment in ways that ensure the ecological and commemorative integrity of these places for present and future generations." Experiencing national parks, marine conservation areas, and historic sites provides significant learning opportunities, made more memorable by the knowledgeable staff who tell the story of these unique sites to visitors. This deeper connection and understanding of our natural and cultural heritage will help grow a culture of protecting these special places.

Several initiatives taken in 2016 and 2017 reflect what we heard during this year's round table engagement:

Riding Mountain National Park

- Parks Canada launched free admission for all visitors in 2017, as part of the Canada 150 program. To ensure the best possible visitor experience for Canadians, significant planning and preparations were required, and many new measures were implemented. The free 2017 Discovery Pass was launched in December 2016 and by the end of March 2017, close to 5.4 million passes had been ordered by Canadians and international visitors. This led to an early increase in visitation—a trend that continued throughout 2017.
- Parks Canada hosts Citizenship Ceremonies each year in some of the country's most treasured natural and cultural places, from Fort Langley National Historic Site in British Columbia to Ardgowan National Historic Site in Charlottetown, Prince

Edward Island. Additionally, to introduce them to our parks, Parks Canada is committed to providing free admission for all new citizens into its places during their first year of Canadian citizenship, through collaboration with the Institute for Canadian Citizenship's Cultural Access Pass.

- The seventh edition of Canada's Coolest School Trip launched in the fall of 2017, and this year's winning class will visit Parks Canada places in Ontario to learn about Thousand Islands National Park and Fort Wellington, Rideau Canal and Laurier House national historic sites. The contest is open to grades 7, 8, 9 and secondary 1, 2, 3 classes. Classes must create a photo essay about a cultural, historical or environmental stewardship project they took part in, explaining how it relates to Parks Canada. With this initiative, the Agency is working to reach and inspire a much greater number of youth through schools. The winners were announced in April 2018.
- Parks Canada's Learn-to Camp initiative to overcome barriers to connecting to nature, such as how to set up a tent or cook in the outdoors, increased participants from 11,000 in 2016 to 70,000 in 2017 through 500 events.
- The Parks Canada mobile app, launched in May 2017, was among the top 150 downloaded Canadian apps on Apple's App Store in the summer and has been downloaded more than 170,000 times.

To build on these programs, and guided by the input from the 2017 Minister's Round Table, the Minister commits to the following actions.

What We Heard	What We Will Do – The Minister's Response
Focus the visitor experience on a connection to nature and history.	**Parks Canada is committed to the development of programs and services that encourage Canadians to experience national parks and national historic sites, and learn more about the natural environment and Canada's heritage. To achieve this we will:** • As Parks Canada continually renews its interpretive and outreach programming, ensure that there is a strong focus on: - Creating a meaningful connection to nature and history, and nurturing a strong culture of conservation in Canada; - Promoting ecosystem science and learning opportunities, and links to citizen science programs; and - Working with other jurisdictions and "gateway communities" to provide interconnected experiences that go beyond park boundaries. • As Parks Canada continually improves its visitor experience programming and introduces new offers, each park and site which offers staffed programming will apply innovative approaches to communications, marketing, and the use of technology to enhance the visitor experience and bring our places to Canadians—without compromising the principles of ecological or commemorative integrity. • Expand the Learn-to Camp program to ensure that more low- and middle-income families and new Canadians have an opportunity to experience Canada's outdoors, including urban regions. • Evaluate opportunities for Parks Canada to expand and enhance its winter programs and park openings in the winter and shoulder season.

What We Heard	What We Will Do – The Minister's Response
Innovate in Communications and Engagement.	**Helping Canadians discover Parks Canada places through communications and engagement is an important part of creating a deeper connection. Effective communications, in turn, can be amplified by the voices of parks staff and scientists. To do this we will:** • Further develop the Parks Canada mobile app that allows people to learn about Parks Canada places, including more science content, videos, and images (since its launch, 170,000 downloads of the app have occurred). • Add national historic sites to the Parks Canada mobile app, including plaques at non-Parks Canada managed sites. • Encourage Parks Canada staff to connect directly with Canadians through apps, videos, emerging technologies such as virtual reality, images, and social media to tell their stories, and better connect with communities adjacent to their sites. • Create more opportunities for parks staff and scientists to tell the story of Canada's natural and historical places outside of Parks Canada places (for example in schools and community centres). • Create opportunities for the Minister to share with Canadians the work of Parks Canada.
Strategies to Engage Youth.	**A focus on youth is important to Parks Canada, and to demonstrate this we will:** • In partnership with other jurisdictions and non-profit organizations, develop products and materials that help youth learn more about national parks and national historic sites. • Develop additional opportunities for youth to get involved with Parks Canada, whether through employment in Green Jobs at Parks Canada places or as volunteers or members of Parks Canada's campus clubs network. • Make admission to all Parks Canada places free for youth aged 17 and under, effective January 1, 2018. Consider further strategies to improve access for school programs and non-profit youth groups.

What We Heard	What We Will Do – The Minister's Response
Reach New Audiences and Encourage Diversity.	**Encouraging diversity among visitors to Parks Canada places is a priority. The goal is to ensure more Canadians are able to experience and enjoy national parks and national historic sites, with a particular emphasis on people who have had little opportunity to enjoy the outdoors. To do this we will:** • Research how Canada's changing demographic profile impacts the ways people view and experience national parks and national historic sites. Based on this research, Parks Canada will adapt its programs and communications to ensure access to an increasingly diverse population. • Continue to make admission to Parks Canada places free for one year for any adult who has become a Canadian citizen in the previous 12 months, and encourage more Citizenship Ceremonies in Parks Canada places. • Help more low- and middle income families to visit and enjoy national parks and national historic sites. • As part of the program to restore Parks Canada infrastructure and assets, ensure that improvements allow for greater access to people with varying abilities. Parks Canada will also incorporate new national accessibility legislation that aims to promote equality of opportunity and participation for people of varying abilities. • Use technology, communications, and marketing to reach a more diverse audience.
Innovate in Sharing Historic Sites.	**Parks Canada plays a key role in telling stories about our diverse heritage, and access to historic sites is an important way for visitors to enhance their experience of our past. In order to strengthen this role, we will:** • Develop new and innovative ways through interpretive programs, digital technologies, and partnerships to share stories and profiles of Canada's historic places. • Ensure that stories from new Canadians, who are often underrepresented in the historical narrative, are developed and told in parks and historic sites.

What We Heard	What We Will Do – The Minister's Response
Indigenous Storytelling and Stewardship.	**Creating opportunities for Indigenous peoples to tell their own stories about sites of cultural significance would allow visitors to learn more about Indigenous history, and would be an important aspect of reconciliation. To facilitate this, we will:** • Work with Indigenous peoples and communities on Indigenous stewardship and guardians initiatives, ensure that these efforts can apply to national historic sites and can include sharing Indigenous stories and history.

Theme: Sustain

Parks Canada is a large and complex organization, with an annual budget of over $1.2 billion and over 7,000 staff during the peak summer season. Managing such an organization requires strong governance and stable funding to ensure long-term success in both protecting our environment while recognizing the economic value of our parks and historic sites.

Parks Canada places make important contributions to the Canadian economy by generating about $3.38 billion annually to Canada's GDP, supporting approximately 40,000 full-time equivalent jobs, and contributing to the economic vitality of over 400 communities. Parks Canada operations demonstrate that the environment and the economy can complement each other while still maintaining a focus on ecological and commemorative integrity.

The theme of sustain addresses actions to strengthen governance, provide stable funding, collaborate with external partners, and ensure that Parks Canada is accountable by providing greater access to reports and more opportunities for participation.

Kejimkujik National Park and National Historic Site

What We Heard	What We Will Do – The Minister's Response
Governance and Decision Making.	**Strong governance is critical to ensuring the actions noted in this document are addressed, to assist the Minister in her oversight of the Parks Canada Agency, and to help senior management by providing advice and guidance. To do this, we will:** • Expand the inclusion of external perspectives in decision-making at Parks Canada. • Ensure that Parks Canada employee orientation and training materials make staff fully aware of and understand the priorities of ecological and commemorative integrity. • Ask the Chief Executive Officer of Parks Canada to ensure that the Agency's performance management structures for managers and executives appropriately encompass and advance the priorities of ecological integrity and commemorative integrity as set out in the *Canada National Parks Act* and the *Parks Canada Agency Act*. • Continue to promote greater gender equity and representation from Indigenous Canadians and minority groups.
Full Economics of Parks.	**To address the issue of stable and adequate funding, we will review the financial model for Parks Canada:** • Conduct a review of Parks Canada's business model with a focus on ways to optimize the Agency's assets, resources, and revenues to better achieve the mandate of protecting and presenting Canada's national heritage places. • Complete an evaluation of strategic assets, and identify the resources needed to restore infrastructure to an acceptable state, or to decommission some infrastructure and rehabilitate the site. • Develop a longer-term operational funding strategy that allows a degree of financial security for Parks Canada to deliver on its mandate. • Evaluate park fees to ensure they do not pose a barrier to access. • Undertake up-to-date research on the economic value of Parks Canada operations to the Canadian economy, including the benefits to local communities. • Update the evaluation of the natural capital and value of our national parks.

What We Heard	What We Will Do – The Minister's Response
Collaboration and Partnerships.	**Parks Canada can enhance its performance by collaborating with other agencies, civil society, communities and the private sector. To improve collaboration, we will:** • More closely align and collaborate with Environment and Climate Change Canada, particularly on research related to climate change, species-at-risk, and the Arctic. • Work with communities neighbouring Parks Canada places to help advance shared goals for conservation and enjoyment of national parks, national marine conservation areas, and national historic sites. • Work with the private sector to enhance low-impact recreation opportunities that support a positive visitor experience. • Further develop partnerships with organizations that have similar mandates to advance conservation science and protected areas in Canada.
Transparency and Public Input.	**The Government of Canada is committed to increased public input and transparency in decision-making. To further this commitment, Parks Canada will:** • Ensure research, data, environmental assessments, and monitoring reports are made publicly available. • Ensure there is public input into accountability sessions such as the Minister's Round Table, environmental assessments, and development proposals. • Ensure all public consultation processes adhere to best practices for openness and transparency, and provide adequate time for review.

Next Steps

Parks Canada staff will review the actions noted in this document and develop plans to implement them. Some of the recommendations can be undertaken immediately; others will require longer term planning and approval of funding. The goal will be to report progress on the implementation of these plans during the Minister's Round Table in 2019.

Conclusion

Thanks to input from over 13,000 Canadians during this year's Minister's Round Table, we have a better understanding of what Canadians want for the future of our national parks, national historic sites, and marine conservation areas. Not only did we hear from more Canadians this year than ever before, but we also heard from groups we hadn't heard from in the past during Minister's Roundtables — youth, amilies, newcomers to Canada, and Canadians living in urban areas.

The comments and advice we received from participants represent a wealth of new ideas and strategies for reaching Parks Canada's long-standing goals. They also illustrate the immense challenges of safeguarding Canada's natural and historic treasures in the face of global warming and other environmental changes, and of making these national treasures accessible to Canada's increasingly diverse citizens.

Parks Canada is very excited about turning the good ideas shared at the round table into reality.